



In the late 19th century if you were to leave Duxbury for Boston, the journey might have taken you out through Tinkertown to the Boston and Plymouth Rd which ran north; part of that section is now known as Elm and Summer streets.

By 1800 from the Tree of Knowledge (South St.) to Four Mile Hill (Cross St.) the street was dotted with the farms of 2 prosperous families the Fords and the Chandlers. Today that area is still marked as Fordville and Chandlerville.

In 1832 when he was 24 years old Eli Chandler married Abigail Frost from the Nook; the time was right for him to settle on his own homestead. The third child and second son of Jesse Chandler, Eli, his brother William and sister Celia all married Frost siblings within 2 years of each other and each settled along Summer St.

Eli, whose childhood home had been the Cape Cod style house today bounded by East St., built a "half cape" on the northern point of his father's land. Cousins Eben and Wadsworth Chandler's pastures lay behind him and the Ford farms began to the north.

As was often the case, the land and buildings were provided for the newlyweds by the bridegroom's father. It is curious to note, however, that unlike the custom of the day, Eli never paid off this debt. At father Jesse's death in 1865 "Eli's farm" was listed as an asset and in fact was willed to Eli's mother Abigail Sampson Chandler who then left it jointly to the Chandler siblings who survived her. In 1867 at 59, Eli finally bought outright the homestead on which he had resided for 35 years.

The house began as a classic "half cape," a front parlor with doors leading to a small burning room, large keeping room and pantry all wrapped round a central chimney, the heart of the house. Front and back stairs led to sleeping quarters. Though there were separate outbuildings, an unfinished shed ran off the back of the house.

Eli and Abigail had one child who lived to maturity, a daughter Annabella. She married James Cooper who moved into the Chandler house. Sometime during these years the house was expanded to a full Cape to make room for both couples.

The expansion was nearly a mirror image of the existing structure. A front room with 2 doors led into the keeping room and into a small bed room. The pantry moved across the house and a third staircase rose to the north chamber upstairs. The original back stairs were closed off and "good morning stairs" ran up from the front door to the chimney base where they split left and right to the chambers.

Both Eli and his daughter died in 1877 when the house passed briefly to the widow Chandler, then to her son-in-law James Cooper who kept it until 1908.

By the time of Eli's death his sister Martha (who married cousin Elbridge Chandler) was living across the street; it was these 2 farms which provide the informal border between Chandlerville and Fordville. After the death of Annabella, James Cooper married "the girl next door," Ella Ford; she kept the house until 1922.

By the early twentieth century, the DeLorenzo family had settled on Summer St. and by 1970 2 generations of their family had occupied Eli's homestead. For its first 90 years the house remained in one family, and for the next 50, in the other.

Architecturally the house is much as it was at its 1860s expansion. The full cape floor plan has been modified only by the replacement of the central chimney with 2 smaller ones. Three staircases still lead to the 2nd floor and the cellar retains the massive mortarless brick chimney base, unusual in that it is hollow and arched.

The house Eli Chandler built in 1832 is currently owned by Joseph Q. and Leslie D. Guccione.

--Leslie Davis Guccione, researcher